

EELV Program Saves Billions, Honored With Top Award

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LOS ANGELES AIR FORCE BASE, Calif. (AFPN) – The Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV) Program Office recently received a top-level award for its efforts in saving the Air Force \$5 to \$7 billion.

EELV's innovative payload-to-launch vehicle integration design and standardization of booster cores earned the program office the 1999 Defense Standardization Program National Honorary Award.

The driving force behind the EELV program is the effort to make space launch more affordable for the nation by using a family of unmanned, expendable space launch vehicles that have evolved from existing systems. These will comprise the Department of Defense's sole source of expendable medium- and heavy-lift transportation to orbit.

EELV is the first program designed to use a standard specification for government payloads that will use the same mechanical and electrical interface to the launch vehicle and will employ a standardized booster core. This new design will facilitate manufacturing, assembly, payload integration, and [the] launch operation process.

"EELV improves on the current Delta II, Atlas, and Titan launch systems by providing, for the first time, standard mechanical, electrical, and environmental payload-to-booster interfaces," said Knauf. "This means we can more readily switch payloads from one EELV booster to the other. This flexibility is a first for the Air Force and is very important to the warfighter and [Air Force] Space Command."

The Delta IV and Atlas V families of the EELV booster use the same standard booster core, said Knauf. The largest vehicle in each family basically uses the same core as the smallest vehicle.

The EELV development program is about 75 percent complete. Production of flight vehicles for the first EELV launches [is] well underway, and the first government flight is scheduled to take place in May 2002.

Editor's Note: Summerall is with the Space and Missile Systems Center Public Affairs Office, Los Angeles AFB, Calif. This information is in the public domain at www.af.mil/news.

EELV has joined with Lockheed Martin Astronautics Corporation and the Boeing Company to develop a national launch capability that satisfies the government's forecasted launch requirements and reduces the cost of space launch by at least 25 percent, said Lt. Col Jim Knauf, EELV and Delta IV program manager.

Evolved Expendable Launch Vehicle (EELV). A family of launch vehicles, services, and supporting systems that will significantly reduce the life cycle cost of launching planned government and commercial payloads between 2001-2020. Lockheed Martin Astronautics, in partnership with Boeing and the U.S. Air Force, is developing a cost-effective, highly responsive family of launch vehicles to meet all DoD objectives.

Image courtesy Lockheed Martin Astronautics

